

DISCUSSION OF THE PAPER
BY SHEILA SHERLOCK:
‘‘THE TREATMENT OF HEPATITIS’’*

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IT would be presumptuous of me to attempt to add anything to the masterful survey of the treatment of hepatitis given by Sheila Sherlock. I disagree with her on only one point that perhaps reveals a proclivity of mine. I should not eliminate alcoholic beverages from the diet of patients who have clearly recovered from typical hepatitis. I know of no reason to believe that, in moderation, such beverages are harmful to the normal liver or to a liver which has recovered at least clinically from viral hepatitis. I agree with Dr. Sherlock that it is wise to warn the patient that he might find himself, for some time, more susceptible to the effect of one or two drinks before dinner than before he had hepatitis.

The matter of bed rest and diet in the treatment of hepatitis continues to be discussed. My opinion, based on the study we did in Japan some years ago under the leadership of Thomas C. Chalmers, is that prolonged rest in bed is not necessary. I allow patients to be up and around their rooms or at home as soon as they are clearly over the acute stages of the disease and begin to feel like moving around. Such patients are required to rest for an hour after each meal, and under no circumstances to tire themselves. I believe this leads to a more rapid convalescence by preventing the syndrome that arises from prolonged bed rest. The matter of diet is more controversial. I attempt to supply, as soon as possible, a normal diet which is somewhat enriched in protein, hoping that this will promote more rapid healing of the liver. The evidence for this is slim, however.

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